A NATIVE FOOD PLANT FOR THE BUTTERFLY DEUDORIX EPIJARBAS (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE)

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Two subspecies of *Deudorix epijarbas* have been described from Austral D. e. diovis Hewitson which ranges from Mackay to Gosford and D. e. diovis Hewitson which ranges from Mackay to Gosford and D. e. dio Waterhouse found from Cape York to Tully. The larvae of the former have be recorded feeding within the seed capsules (fruit) of Tulipwood, Happali pendula (Common and Waterhouse, 1972) and Macadamia nuts (Ironside, 1972) Exotic subspecies have been found feeding in the fruit of Cinnarus nitchia Aesculus indicus and Pomegranate, Punica granatum. No food plant to previously been recorded for the north Queensland subspecies D. e. dido.

In May 1974, at Iron Range, Cape York Peninsula, Mr J. W. C. d'April (pers. commun.) found several pupal exuviae of a lycaenid butterfly in unknown identity inside dried and eaten out seed capsules of the palm Capper rumphiana Mart. (Pl. I). In September 1974, also at Iron Range, Mr & Mrs. Walford-Huggins, my wife and I found many lycaenid pupal exuviae in simulation fruit, and following a more extensive search located two unemers. pupae. These emerged on 20th and 25th Sep. 1974, both as male D. e. dil

Never more than one pupa was found in any one *rumphiana* fruit and number of attacked fruit were empty suggesting that the larva, having devome the entire contents and requiring further food, had moved on to a new for Each attacked fruit was secured to its stalk by silken threads which the larva had apparently spun to prevent its home falling from the tree as the fruit discommon and Waterhouse (1972) and Ironside (1973) give life history not for *D. e. diovis*.

Caryota rumphiana grows only in rain forest and is often difficult to as both the trunk and leaves blend well with surrounding vegetation. Hower this palm is easily distinguished from other Australian palms by its very distinguished shape: it is the only endemic species with bipinnate leaves. Large specime

may grow to a height of 20 metres or more.

As this palm does not grow more than a little south of Iron Rap D. e. dido must attack other plants between Cooktown and Tully. Common Waterhouse (1972) suggest that in north-eastern Australia larvae of this related species should be sought in the fruits of any plant with large seeds may well be rewarding therefore, for those persons with the opportunity examine native fruits for possible attack by this interesting butterfly.

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References

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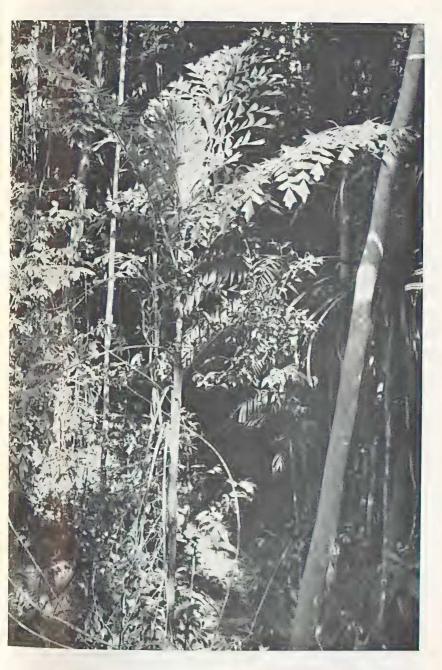


PLATE I

A relatively young specimen (height approximately 8 m) of the palm *Caryota rumphiana* growing in dense rain forest on the slopes of Mt. Lamond, Iron Range, Cape York Peninsula.